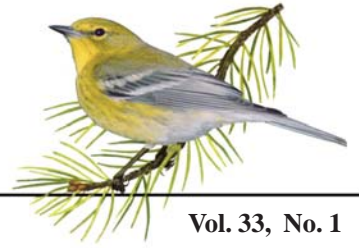


The Pine Warbler



January 2013

Vol. 33, No. 1

Program Notes:

NEW MEETING TIME IN 2013!

At its December 11 board meeting, members decided to try starting the meetings at 7 p.m. instead of 7:30 pm. There will still be snacks in the kitchen, so come on in a little earlier than in the past. If it doesn't work out, we can always return to the "old time."

The year ahead: Rumors have it that John and Gloria Jones will present the hummingbirds of Ecuador for the February program. You won't want to miss it.

THANKS AGAIN to Al Barr for serving as president while we met at Mercer Arboretum and then making it possible for PWWS to meet at the beautiful new Spring Creek Nature Center. We're all glad he will continue to be involved with PWWS and hope that Carole B. will also continue to attend.

Special message from Al:

It has been my privilege and honor to serve Piney Woods Wildlife Society as president for the past seven years. I would like to thank the various officers, board members, and committee members for the work that they did while I was president. Kathy Coward has been voted president for the next year. She has been president in the past and did an excellent job. I will be assisting her next year. Thank you members for your continued support.

The Whooping Crane Trip!

The Barrs have provided the following information about the annual Whooping Crane trip set for February 16 the weekend before the big whooping crane celebration in Rockport. The trip is on the 85 passenger Wharf Cat (catamaran), leaving from Rockport. It features an upper deck observation area, main deck observation area, and indoor restaurant style booths with huge windows for respite in inclement weather. They have hot coffee and snacks for sale and restrooms, too. Admission is \$45 for adults, \$43 for seniors, and \$20 for children. They provide an expert birder and spotter on the upper deck. The Barrs took the trip for the last two years

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PWWS January Program

January 15

**Presented by Jane and Steven Stones
Australian and Tasmanian Wildlife**



We're starting the year with a visit to the birds and wildlife that live in Australia and Tasmania! Long-time members Jane and Steven Stones will have you putting on your traveling shoes to take a trip "down under!" They will share photos of the unique wildlife they saw and experiences we all will enjoy. Refreshments will be sweet and crunchy ANZAC "biscuits" and tasty Tim Tam pastries!

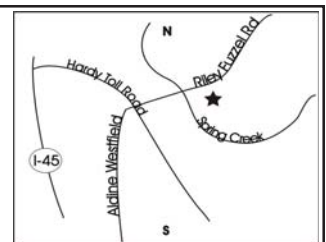


Get the New Year started with some great humor, Stones style!



**Date: January 15
Time: Social 6:30 p.m.
Meeting 7:00 p.m.**

**Spring Creek Greenway
Nature Center**
1300 Riley Fuzzel Road



Directions to the Nature Center: Aldine-Westfield turns into Riley Fuzzel Road just northeast of Spring so there are several ways to get there. 1. Take the Rayford/Sawdust exit and go East (right) on Rayford Rd. It dead ends at Riley Fuzzel, then turn South (right) and drive to the Center. or, 2. take Spring-Cypress east to Aldine Westfield through Olde Town Spring, turn left and then on to Riley Fuzzel for a short distance and turn right; or, 3. Take Aldine Westfield north from Mercer Arboretum until it turns into Riley Fuzzel. Turn right, go under the freeway and over the bridge. Watch for a sign on the right (lighted at night) and a concrete driveway. The building is not visible from the road but club members can count on security as the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department is also housed there.



and saw lots of whooping cranes. Departure is at 10 am and return is at 2pm. We all must arrive and be paid and checked in at least 30 minutes before 10 am. We have reservations for 20. **We need to know exactly how many are going by the January meeting.** We can adjust the number up or down.



Heart Happenings

After the first of the year, plans will start shaping up for the 2013 sea turtle nesting season. If you know anyone who is interested in participating in the sea turtle nest monitoring program (1 April - 15 July) please share this information: Dr. Kim Reich of Texas A&M University at Galveston will be conducting training the last two weeks of March in Galveston. Her goal is to have the patrol team finalized by early to mid-February! Let me know if you're interested and I'll make sure Kim gets the message. Carole@seaturtles.org.



Collaboration and cooperation spell good news for the sea turtles. HEART and Sea Turtle Restoration Project have worked with other groups for several years to get signs on Texas beaches to alert tourists and residents about the presence of sea turtles and the number to call if

one is seen on the beach. Now, many of the signs need to be replaced and there is a big team ready to get the job done.

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Texas A&M University at Galveston, Moody Gardens of Galveston, the Houston Zoo and, of course, HEART and the Sea Turtle Restoration Project. Lyndsey Howell of NMFS has suggested a great idea that will help officials find a certain site by merely numbering each of the signs. At least 100 new signs will be going up on the Upper Texas Coast before the nesting season begins. Thanks to Ben Higgins of NMFS for getting this project moving and coordinating the donors.

Spring Creek Christmas Bird Count December 15, 2012 – Report by Al Barr

I was a little apprehensive about the forecast weather for Saturday, Dec. 15th, when the forecast was for a 60% chance of rain. However, when 4:00 AM rolled around for the owling, it was partly cloudy and shirt sleeve weather. I thought that if the weather stayed like this all day long, the birding would be great. The weather was like that most of the day.

It was a successful day of birding as approximately 96 species were seen. Some species must still be confirmed. In past years the count was in the high eighties or low nineties. There were not large numbers of individual species seen this year. Owling was not too good as we got only two Eastern Screech Owls and no others, although Great Horned Owls were reported in two other areas. Birding in the woods was difficult because the birds would not come out.

There were five groups in the count circle. Debbie Layer led the group in Jones State Forest where two Red-cockaded Woodpeckers were recorded. David Henderson and Gary and Kathy Clark led the Woodlands Group. Damien Carey led the Hooks Airport group, and Al Barr led the Mercer group. I would like to thank the group leaders and all of the participants for this year's count. More information will be coming in the February newsletter.

East Texas Nature Virginia Creeper in the Shadows By Diane Cabiness, Texas Master Naturalist

"Last night, there came a frost, which has done great damage to my garden... It is sad that Nature will play such tricks on us poor mortals, inviting us with sunny smiles to confide in her, and then, when we are entirely within her power, striking us to the heart."
- Nathaniel Hawthorne, The American Notebooks

Dr. Alan Beck, ScD, the director of the Center of the Human-Animal Bond at the Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine, says "Just looking at nature causes a relaxation response. Much of our stress comes from thinking about the past or worrying about the future." His answer to this dilemma is to be in the present and you will be less stressed. What better way to be in the "present" than heading out of doors for a bit of gardening work or perhaps a walk in the woods. Either way you might run into my old friend, Virginia Creeper, *Parthenocissus quinquefolia* which is a vigorous and fast growing vine up to 50 feet. It is recognized by its leaves, which have five leaflets. Leaves are green and when young are tinted with red. Leaflets are three to seven inches long, and up to two inches wide.

Most novice gardeners will misidentify this plant as poison ivy which has 3 leaflets. Although it is not poison ivy, it has sap that can cause a skin irritation in some folks. I am one of those. For years in a yard in Kingwood one of the chores I was asked to do was to prune back the Virginia creeper from invading my friend and client's garden. I was already allergic to Poison Ivy and after a number years of beating back Virginia creeper I found that wherever the sap touched by skin I would break out in a rash. Although this is a bit of a nuisance I like this tough vine quite a bit.

In the fall the color is splendid. It is a magnificent red to maroon color



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Numbers of Interest

Heart Hotline..... 281 444-6204



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The deadline for submissions is the 25th of the previous month, earlier if possible. Always add "PWWS" in the subject line. All emails will be responded to within 3 days. If you do not receive a response please call 832 717-3276. All articles are subject to approval by the PWWS Board.

Please send new address changes and corrections to drummond@thedrummonds.com and add PWWS to the subject line. Thank you.

Visit: <http://pineywoodswildlifesociety.org>